

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 7608

FOR DELIVERY AT OPENING OF BUSINESS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, GT
SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS REPORT: EMBASSY COMMENTS

REF: STATE 297443

REFTEL DRAFT OF THE CLASSIFIED HUMAN RIGHTS EVALUATION REPORT
FOR GUATEMALA STRIKES US AS EXCELLENT PRESENTATION. WE HOPE
FOLLOWING, FOR THE MOST PART, MINOR CHANGES WILL BE TAKEN INTO
ACCOUNT IN PREPARATION OF FINAL VERSION. OUR COMMENTS AND
SUGGESTED CHANGES ARE KEYED TO REFTEL NUMBERING AND FORMAT.

A - UNNUMBERED PARAGRAPH TWO, ADD FINAL SENTENCE FOLLOWING
"MOVEMENT": "THE LAUGERUD ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN LESS THAN
SUCCESSFUL IN CONTAINING VIOLENCE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE STEMMING
FROM A VARITEY OF SOURCES."

A - UNNUMBERED PARAGRAPH THREE, LINE NINE, TO READ: "A FACTION
OF THE GUATEMALAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PGT) HAS REVERTED TO..."

A - UNNUMBERED PARAGRAPH FOUR, FINAL SENTENCE TO READ: "THERE
ARE PREDICTIONS THAT VIOLENCE, AFTER A PERIOD OF RELATIVE CALM,
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MAY BE ON THE UPSWING IN THE CLOSING MONTHS OF THE CAMPAIGN."

A - 1A, TO READ: "TORTURE AND SUMMARY KILLINGS OF ALLEGED SUB-
VERSIVES HAVE OCCURRED WITH SOME FREQUENCY IN GUATEMALAN HISTORY.
AFTER THE DEFEAT OF THE INSURGENT MOVEMENT IN THE EARLY 1970'S
AND PARTICULARLY SINCE THE LUAGERUD ADMINISTRATION TOOK OFFICE,
INCIDENTS OF THIS TYPE DECREASED ALTHOUGH SOME STILL OCCUR. WE

HAVE NO EVIDENCE OF INSTITUTIONALIZED TORTURE BY THE GOVERNMENT."

A - 1B, TO READ: "CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING PUNISHMENT--
LEGALLY NOT PERMITTED BUT ABUSES PROBABLY OCCUR FROM TIME TO
TIME DURING INTERROGATIONS OF SUSPECTED TERRORISTS OR THOSE
ACCUSED OF SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITY. HOWEVER, THERE HAS BEEN A MARKED
IMPROVEMENT OVER THE COURSE OF THE LAUGERUD ADMINISTRATION."

A - 2A, THIRD SENTENCE AND FOLLOWING TO READ: "THERE IS FREEDOM
OF ASSEMBLY FOR NON-POLITICAL PURPOSES. AS IN MANY OTHER COUN-
TRIES LARGE POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS AND PARADES ARE SUBJECT TO
REGULATION BY THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR. LABOR UNIONS ARE FREE
UNDER THE LAW TO ORGANIZE, BUT THE GOVERNMENT AT TIMES CO-OPTS
AND OTHERWISE ATTEMPTS TO NEUTRALIZE UNION LEADERSHIP. THERE
ARE SEVERAL STRONG FREE UNIONS OPERATING IN THE COASTAL
AGRICULTURAL AREAS AND ELSEWHERE."

A - 2C, ADD FINAL SENTENCE: "THE COMMUNIST PARTY IS PROSCRIBED
BY LEGISLATION."

A - 4, SIXTH SENTENCE TO READ: "IN HIS JULY STATE OF THE NATION
ADDRESS, PRESIDENT LAUGERUD CONDEMNED THE USE OF INTIMIDATION
AND HARASSMENT BY LARGE LANDOWNERS AGAINST LABOR." SAME PARA,
INSERT AFTER SENTENCE ENDING "ON RIGHTIST VIOLENCE": "IT HAS
RESISTED PRESSURES TO PROCLAIM A STATE OF SIEGE." CONCLUDE
PARAGRAPH AS FOLLOWS: "PRESIDENT LAUGERUD HAS CALLED IN THE
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PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES AND LEADERS OF THE PARTIES TO EXHORT
THEM TO AGREE ON GROUND RULES TO DISCOURAGE VIOLENCE DURING
THE CAMPAIGN PRECEDING THE MARCH 1978 ELECTIONS. IN ADDITION,
THE GOVERNMENT REACTED WITH GREAT RESTRAINT IN THE FACE OF
POTENTIALLY DISRUPTIVE LABOR DEMONSTRATIONS IN RECENT WEEKS."

A - 5, REPLACE WITH: "IN CRITICIZING UNILATERAL 'INTERVENTION,'
THE GOG HAS TAKEN THE POSITION THAT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS
ARE A PROPER CONCERN OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ACTING
COLLECTIVELY. WE DO NOT INTERPRET THIS TO MEAN THE GOVERNMENT
WOULD BLESS A VISIT BY THE IAHRIC AT THIS TIME, BARRING THE
EMERGENCE OF SOME SPECIAL REASON FOR AN INQUIRY. THE GOG DOES
NOT REGARD AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL TO BE AN UNBIASED, INDEPENDENT
MONITOR."

B - 1A(6), COMMENT: IT IS DIFFICULT FOR US TO CONCEIVE OF
OUTSIDE OBSERVERS OF GUATEMALAN ELECTIONS. TO DO SO, WITHOUT
DRAMATIC A PRIORI EVIDENCE OF MASSIVE FRAUD ABREWING, WOULD BE
SEEN AS GRATUITOUS, AND RISK PLACING OTHER FACETS OF OUR
RELATIONSHIP IN JEOPARDY. IN ANY CASE, ANY SUCH INITIATIVE
SHOULD NOT COME FROM THE USG.

B - 1A(7), TO READ: "BE PREPARED TO MAKE A DEMARCHE TO THE CUBANS IF WE RECEIVE ANY GOOD INDICATION CUBA IS INCREASING ITS CURRENT LEVEL OF FINANCIAL..."

B - 1B(3), SENTENCE TWO TO READ: "ONE CLEAR SIGNAL WOULD BE THE RECALL OF OUR AMBASSADOR FOR CONSULTATIONS IF THE USG HAS WHAT IT CONSIDERS TO BE GOOD EVIDENCE OF A FRAUDULENT OUTCOME."

B - 2, UNNUMBERED SECOND PARAGRAPH, ADD FINAL PARENTHETICAL SENTENCE: "(HOWEVER, MORE RECENTLY, PRESIDENT LAUGERUD AND OTHER HIGH-RANKING OFFICIALS HAVE PUBLICLY TERMED THE HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERN A PRETEXT CLOAKING USG RELUCTANCE TO SUPPLY ARMS TO AN ADVERSARY OF THE UK IN THE BELIZE DISPUTE."
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B - 2, UNNUMBERED THIRD PARAGRAPH, THIRD SENTENCE AND NEW FINAL SENTENCE TO READ: "THE MEDIA REACTION IN GUATEMALA HAS BEEN MIXED, WITH SOME FEW NEWSPAPERS APPLAUDING THE POLICY WHILE MOST DESCRIBE IT AS A MORE SUBTLE FORM OF INTERVENTION. A COMMON REACTION IS TO ASK, 'WHAT ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF TERRORISM VICTIMS?'"

B - 4, UNNUMBERED SECOND PARAGRAPH: DELETE THIRD SENTENCE. WE ARE NOT SURE THAT THE ASSERTION IN QUESTION WOULD APPLY EQUALLY TO ALL THREE CANDIDATES.
BOSTER

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